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United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest Service

Alaska Region  
R10-MB-108



# Kelp Bay Project

INFORMATION BULLETIN NO. 2

CHATHAM AREA - TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

Region 10  
Tongass National Forest

Chatham Area  
204 Siginaka Way  
Sitka, Alaska 99835  
(907) 747-6671

Reply To: 1950

Date: June 26, 1990

Dear Participant:

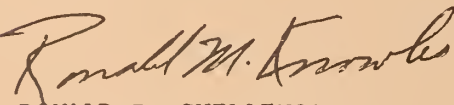
Thank you for your continued interest in project planning on the Chatham Area of the Tongass National Forest. The Forest Service has completed Scoping, the initial phase of the Kelp Bay timber sale project.

During this phase, the public requested approximately 550 copies of the Kelp Bay scoping information bulletin. Through the end of the scoping period, we had received comments from 52 individuals, groups, or agencies. Some responses were from private citizens concerned about management of natural resources on the Forest. Some were people who depend on the Tongass National Forest natural resources for their livelihood, such as outfitters and guides, fishermen, and people in the timber harvest industry. We also heard from local, state, and federal agencies with concerns about the resources we cooperatively manage, either within the project boundary or adjoining the project area. Examples are Alaska Department of Fish and Game, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Sitka State Parks Citizens Advisory Board. Our thanks to those who responded. Your comments have helped us focus attention on what data to collect, select the types of analysis to be done, and identify how we will respond to the issues.

In an effort to keep you in touch with our process, enclosed with this letter is a second informational bulletin about the Kelp Bay project. Some of the topics discussed are: the results from public scoping and the final issues; the members of the interdisciplinary planning team; how this project relates to the Tongass Land Management Plan; and a summary of how the planning process works.

I encourage you to spend a few minutes reviewing the enclosed bulletin, and if you have questions or wish to become more familiar with certain aspects of the project, feel free to contact the Kelp Bay planning team leader, Janis Burns Buyarski at (907) 747-6671, or drop by and visit our office. We look forward to having you as associates in the planning process.

Sincerely,

*for*   
RONALD B. SKILLINGS  
Acting Forest Supervisor

Enclosure

900605 926 RED 1950 JBB





## KELP BAY PROJECT BULLETIN NO. 2

The intent of this second bulletin is to share with you what we heard during our scoping efforts. We will also present some information on how the Forest Service planning process works, and how you can stay involved with planning for the Kelp Bay project. We invite you to spend a few minutes reading this information.

### **What were the scoping efforts?**

The first scoping letter and information bulletin was mailed to the public the end of February. Roughly 450 copies were distributed to interested parties. Additional information about the Kelp Bay project was provided through news releases to local media, a radio interview with Raven Radio (KCAW) in Sitka, and an interview with the Sitka News Bureau. This additional exposure resulted in approximately 100 more copies of the scoping bulletin being requested by the interested public. Following the close of the scoping period on April 16th, the Kelp Bay planning team had heard from 52 individuals, public interest groups, or public agencies from Alaska, and throughout the United States.

Your comments have helped the planning team identify the necessary information to collect, the analysis needed and the framework within which the management alternatives will be developed. This will enable us to respond more effectively to public concerns.

### **Who is on the planning team? What are their roles? What is their experience?**

The Kelp Bay planning team is divided into two groups with different roles. Both groups work together, and are comprised of natural resource professionals. The first group is the Core Team. This group of 6 people have full time responsibility for the collection of data, analysis and preparation of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements. The second group is the Extended Team, who work interactively with the core team. For the second group, Kelp Bay is just one of many projects on which they work. See table on next page for the list of team members.

Each ID team member is expected to prepare two separate resource reports. The first will deal with the existing environmental condition and the second will deal with the effects of each alternative for the project. Each of these reports will become part of the planning record, which supports conclusions displayed in the Draft and Final EISs.

Employee	Role	Forest Service Experience
<b>Core Team</b> Janis Burns Joe Costa Cliff Edenshaw Jim Thomas Mike Weber Dick Zaborske	Team Leader, Timber Planner Transportation Planner Subsistence Specialist Data Analyst/Economist Wildlife Biologist Silviculturist/Logging Systems	12 years 21 years 4 years 12 years 12 years 11 years
<b>Extended Team</b> Karen Swanson-Iwamoto Ted Falkner Dom Monaco Mary Muller Mary Beth Nelson Steve Paustian Vic Starostka Randy West Fred Glenn	Cultural Resource Planner  Geographic Information Specialist Visual Resource Planner Land/Minerals Specialist Recreation Planner Hydrologist Fish Biologist Soil Scientist Field Crew Supervisor	7 years  33 years 12 years 12 years 8 years 14 years 13 years 10 years 15 years

**How does the Kelp Bay project relate to the Tongass Land Management Plan? How does project planning work?**

Forest Service land management planning is governed by many laws and their accompanying regulations. These laws include the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (RPA), and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) which amended RPA. Other laws significant to management of the Tongass National Forest are the Alaska Statehood Act of 1959, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) and the

Alaska National Interest and Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA).

Project planning, including Kelp Bay project, occurs within the overall framework of Forest level plans. As required by the laws cited above and related planning regulations, the Forest Service has two levels of planning. The first level of planning was the Tongass Land Management Plan of 1979 and the Amendment to the Forest Plan in the Winter 1985-86. These two documents provide specific management direction and scheduling for the Tongass National Forest and provide the foundation for the Kelp Bay project.



The second level in planning is the evaluation of individual projects. The Kelp Bay timber sale project is one of many projects under consideration by the Chatham Area. The purpose of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project is to consider and inform the public of potentially significant effects of timber harvest and related activities in the project area. There are several phases during the preparation of an EIS. These phases are briefly described below.

**Phase 1: Project Initiation** - This phase includes appointing an interdisciplinary team, researching data and public scoping. Following scoping, the issues are finalized and a determination on how to best address the issues is defined. This phase was completed May 1, for the Kelp Bay Project.

**Phase 2: Data Inventory** - Office records are researched and field data collection occurs. A Forest Service crew is currently in the process of collecting field data specific to potential units and road locations. Reports describing the existing environment are prepared. This phase is currently in progress and is expected to be substantially completed by September 1990.

**Phase 3: Development of Alternatives** - A wide range of alternatives to address the issues and current management direction will be developed for consideration. Alternatives are developed by mixing and matching timber harvest units,

roads and log transfer facilities to make volume available while emphasizing a variety of management strategies. For example alternatives might include a No Harvest alternative, a recreation emphasis alternative, and a wildlife emphasis alternative. Alternative development is scheduled to occur in mid to late September.

**Phase 4: Alternative Evaluation** - The effects and outputs (biological, physical, economic and social) are estimated for each alternative considered, if implementation were to occur. The alternatives are then evaluated in terms of how they meet management direction and satisfy the issues. This phase is expected to be complete by Christmas time 1990.



**Phase 5: Publication of the Draft EIS -**

The analysis and findings of the interdisciplinary team are compiled into a single document and made available to the interested public for review. This review allows the public to respond to Forest Service alternatives and findings. During the review period of the draft, open houses to display and answer questions about the alternatives, and subsistence hearings will likely occur in Southeast Alaskan communities affected by the project proposal. The Draft EIS should be available in March 1991.

**Phase 6: Publication of the Final EIS -**

Public comments on the draft EIS and testimony from subsistence hearings will be analyzed and incorporated into the Final EIS. With the Final EIS will be the Record of Decision outlining the decisions of the Regional Forester regarding the Kelp Bay project. At this time the Final EIS is expected by August 1991.

**What is the final set of issues?**

Listed below are the final set of issues the planning team will address while preparing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Included with each issue is a brief summary of public comments and how the Forest Service will respond to those comments as we continue with the planning process.

**ISSUE 1: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF TIMBER HARVEST ACTIVITIES**

This issue reflects concern about effects on community employment and

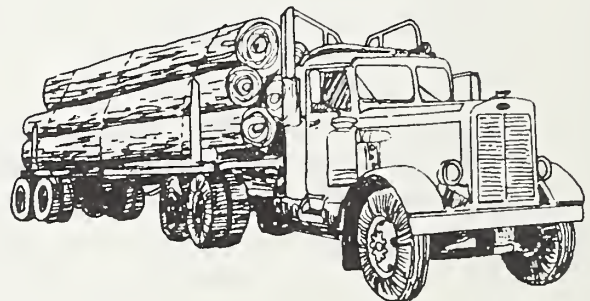
population, on business, on quality of life and lifestyles.

**Summary of Public Responses:**

- Outfitter guides are concerned with being squeezed into smaller and smaller areas not impacted by logging, from which to operate their services to clients.
- Desires the analysis to proceed and conclude with a viable timber sale, by re-entering areas already logged.
- Commercial fisherman would welcome having camp facilities like welding and hydraulic parts on the east side of Baranof Is.
- Concerns for commercial tour operators who use the area, losing business.

**How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Currently information specific to commercial use of the project area does not exist. Much of this information can be extrapolated from Regional, Area, and District use information. The team intends to address this issue in narrative form, as hard figures, and economic computer models are not currently available.





## **ISSUE 2: WATER QUALITY AND FISH HABITAT**

**This issue addresses public concern for protecting water quality in streams which provide habitat to anadromous fish and resident trout.**

### **Summary of Public Responses:**

- Concerns with buffer strip width.
- Concerns with sediment production into Peril Strait and Chatham Strait.
- Concerns with mapping and managing "wetlands and floodplains".
- Concerns with checkerboard affect of units within a watershed.
- Concerns with re-entering areas heavily harvested in 1960's and 1970's.
- Concerns with salmon production in Clear Creek, Ralph's creek, Lake Eva stream system, Saook stream and Appleton Cove stream systems.
- Concerns with shoreline feeding habitat for "outmigrating" salmon.
- Concerns with dungeness crab in Appleton Cove, Hanus Bay, Portage Arm, South Arm Kelp Bay, and Cosmos Cove.



King (Chinook) Salmon

**How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Riparian zone management will be addressed in terms of average width of buffer zones. Current plans are use the Aquatic Habitat Management Handbook for guidance. We will also to leave a minimum buffer width of 100 feet on all streams which provide anadromous fish habitat (class 1). Should pending legislation provide specific direction, that direction would be implemented upon passage by Congress. Timber harvest activity would be restricted within Aquatic management zones, and road construction would only occur to facilitate stream crossings.
- Watershed impacts and sedimentation, will be addressed in narrative form in terms of a sensitivity index jointly developed by hydrologists in the region.
- Impacts to anadromous commercial fish (pinks and coho) and to resident fish (Dolly Varden) will be addressed in narrative form. The TLMP revision team has developed models which will be used to help predict habitat capability.
- Watershed and fisheries enhancement opportunities will be identified.

## **ISSUE 3: SUBSISTENCE**

**This issue reflects public concern for the taking of wildlife, marine life and plants for the "customary and traditional" use by "rural Alaskan" residents. Specifically, the Alaska Native Interest Lands Claim Act (ANILCA) requires the Forest Service to determine if proposed activities "may" limit use.**

### **Summary of Public Responses:**

- Concern that Angoon has a high unemployment rate (80-85% unemployment) and subsistence is critical to survival of many families.
- Concern that putting logging camps in Kelp Bay would provide easy access to areas traditionally used by natives for subsistence. Additional competition could adversely affect the people who depend on subsistence.
- Subsistence resources taken from Kelp Bay, as well as South Peril Strait and the eastern shore of Baranof Island are: Brown bear, Deer, seal and sea lions, halibut, all kinds of salmon, herring, land otter, mink, ermine, shellfish such as crab, clams, mussels, etc., berry picking and crab apples.
- The residents of Angoon feel the pressure and competition for subsistence resources from in Sitka, Hoonah, Tenakee, Kake, Petersburg, and other Southeast communities. This results in fewer resources for more subsistence users.

### **How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Changes in availability of habitat to support fish, wildlife and vegetation commonly used for subsistence will be discussed in terms of acres of changes in habitat, and habitat suitability index from wildlife analysis.
- Changes in accessibility to subsistence resources will be discussed in terms of miles of shoreline not impacted by activities, number of log transfer facil-

ities, number of logging camps and duration of camp use.



### **ISSUE 4: WILDLIFE**

**This issue includes concern over several wildlife species and the habitats critical to maintenance of wildlife populations.**

### **Summary of Public Responses:**

- Concern with biological diversity and wildlife habitat fragmentation.
- Concerns for habitat in Cosmos Cove and Portage Arm - Hanus Bay.
- Concerns with habitat for "old growth" dependent species: Brown bear, Sitka black-tailed deer, mountain goat, marbled murrelet, boreal owl, bald eagle and cavity nesting birds.
- Concerns with deer winter range management.
- Concerns with migratory water fowl habitat, especially Vancouver Canada goose.
- Concerns for estuary habitat dependent species: Crabs, river otter, mink, pine marten and brown bears.
- Concerns that "retention areas" be mapped, inventoried and maintained for duration of planning cycle.



**How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Similar to what was done in the supplemental EIS to 1981-86 and 1986-90 EIS's, changes in habitat for Management Indicator Species will be displayed in acres available prior to 1954, presently available, and available at the end of the planning period. This analysis will be supported by narrative comparison.
- Identify and map high value wildlife areas, with input from ADF&G.



**ISSUE 5: SCENIC QUALITY**

**This issue addresses concerns with areas viewed from popular recreation use areas and marine travel routes. The Kelp Bay project area includes many recreation use areas and adjoins both the Alaska Marine Highway and small boat travelways.**

**Summary of Public Responses:**

- Concerns with use of anchorages in Kelp Bay and Hanus Bay.
- Logging is ugly & uninviting, and detracts from enjoyment of the natural setting.
- Concerns with visual impacts from boat routes.

**How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Inventory Visual Quality Objectives will be mapped. Changes in VQO's will be discussed in narrative form and related to management criteria for each Visual Management Class.

**ISSUE 6: RECREATION**

**Remoteness and solitude found in most of southeast Alaska are some of the characteristics which make the Kelp Bay project area attractive to visitors. In addition, Lake Eva is a LUD II designation. This issue addresses concerns that increased development would change the primitive character of these areas.**

**Summary of Public Responses:**

- Recreational use areas mentioned in public letters were: Lake Eva, Catherine Island, Hanus Bay and North Portage Arm, estuary in South Arm, Saook Bay, Kelp Bay and Pond Island, Cosmos Cove, and Clear River.
- Concern that Lake Eva be Maintained as a LUD II.
- Concern for the Wild and Scenic river potential for streams within the VCU's, especially Glacial River.
- Concerned for continued use of boat anchorages in Appleton Cove, Hanus Bay, Cosmos Cove and Kelp Bay.
- Harvest should only cause a "temporary" interruption to recreational activities by other users.
- Lake Eva is the only major recreation cabin which is accessible to the handicapped. This use should be maintained.
- Concern that logging and road building be limited within 1 mile either side of VCU 295, along Peril Strait.



**How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Recreation use will be addressed in narrative form based on changes in the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum inventory. Impacts will address changes to Recreation places and recreation sites.
- Narrative description of each major recreation drainage will be provided, describing the 'wild, scenic, and/or recreation' characteristics of rivers such as Glacial river.
- Recreation enhancement opportunities will be identified.



**ISSUE 7: MARINE ENVIRONMENT**

This Issue addresses concern for the Intertidal area between upland timber harvest activities and the associated affects on the marine environment.

**Summary of Public Responses:**

- Concerns with 'footprint' of the Log Transfer Facility (LTF).
- Concerns with impacts to water quality and marine resources.

- Concerns with haulouts for sea lions and seals, and other marine mammal habitats like the humpback whale.

- Concerns with non-point surface discharge of bark leachates, sediments, and petroleum spills in the immediate vicinity of the log transfer facility and logging camp operation areas.

- Preference is for the Forest Service operators to re-use previous LTF sites, rather than open new ones.

- Concern noted for LTF locations in South Arm of Kelp Bay, Saook Bay and Upper Middle Arm of Kelp Bay.

**How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Forest Service will work closely with National Marine Fisheries Service and the US Fish and Wildlife service in determining the feasibility of potential LTF sites, and doing the needed habitat evaluation. This area of expertise is outside of the types of upland management The Forest Service normally does. Impacts will be addressed in narrative form.

**ISSUE 8: TIMBER**

This Issue addresses public concern for the amount of timber proposed for harvest, as well as concerns for the condition of previously harvested areas. Also Included with this Issue is the concern for economical entry into new stands. (This issue was not one of the original ones sent to the public in the scoping document, but is one surfaced due to comments from the public).

### **Summary of Public Responses:**

- Concerns that although the planning area has many acres, it does not have great timber resources.
- Concerns with the extent and nature of conifer regeneration in the past harvest areas.
- Concerns for the benefits/costs of re-entering an area already harvested.



### **How the Forest Service plans to respond to these concerns:**

- Timber conditions will be addressed in narrative form based on stand conditions and structure, volume class, available volume in relationship to standing volume and forest types.
- Economic entry will be tested using a road system/logging system network analysis package for a personal computer.
- Silvicultural prescriptions, which include considerations for resources other than timber, will be identified for each harvest unit selected in the Record of Decision.

- Timber stand improvement opportunities will be identified.

### **What issues raised by the public, are not being addressed by the planning team, and why?**

#### **1. How would proposed legislation affect the current plans for Kelp Bay?**

**FS response:** Controversy over management of the Tongass National Forest continues. This has been a Regional and National issue for the past few years. The U.S. Congress currently has a combination of House Rules and Senate Bills under consideration. These are loosely referred to as the "Tongass Timber Reform Act". Since Kelp Bay is not one of 23 areas being considered to be set aside for special designation it is less likely to be affected by Congressional action. Specific provisions of such a bill which could deal with buffer zone width and inter-connecting road systems etc., will be evaluated at the time of passage by Congress. Congressional action is outside the scope of the Kelp Bay project analysis.

#### **2. Concern that the USFS mission statement implies we must make timber available to the Orient.**

**FS Response:** Mission statement: "The Forest Service has the Federal responsibility for national leadership in forestry. Its mission is to provide a continuing flow of natural resource goods and services to help meet the needs of the Nation and to contribute to the needs of the international community. To accomplish this, it has adopted the following objectives:



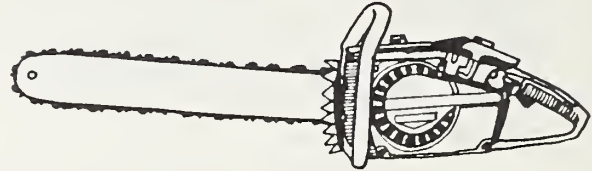
**2. Concern that the USFS mission statement implies we must make timber available to the Orient.**

**FS Response:** Mission statement: "The Forest Service has the Federal responsibility for national leadership in forestry. Its mission is to provide a continuing flow of natural resource goods and services to help meet the needs of the Nation and to contribute to the needs of the international community. To accomplish this, it has adopted the following objectives:

- provide a sustained flow of renewable resources -- outdoor recreation, forage, wood, water, wilderness, wildlife, and fish -- in a combination that best meets the needs of society now and in the future;
- administer the nonrenewable resources of the National Forest System to help meet the Nation's needs for energy and mineral resources;
- promote a healthy and productive environment for the Nation's forests and rangelands;
- develop and make available scientific and technological capabilities to advance renewable natural resource management, use and protection; and
- further natural resource conservation through cooperation with other Federal agencies and State and local government."

The US Forest Service Mission statement applies to our entire agency, and is not specific to the Alaska Region. It is not a direct mandate to 'make wood available to the Orient' from the Alaska Pulp corporation contract. On the whole, the Forest Service participates in many international issues including

things like fisheries management, global warming, and tropical forestry. The Forest Service mission statement is outside the scope of the Kelp Bay project plan.



**3. Why are we cutting timber in Kelp Bay and not someplace else? Kelp Bay should not be considered for logging until all other areas and options are analyzed.**

**FS Response:** The Tongass Land Management Plan (1979) is the place where trade offs between areas are analyzed and discussed. The Tongass Land Management Plan, amended in the Winter of 1985-86, clearly states the Kelp Bay area was scheduled for harvest under terms of the APC contract. The Forest Service has two levels in the planning process. The first level being the Forest Plan, and the second level being the project plan. Trade offs between one project and another project are outside the scope of individual project plans.

Other considerations used in selecting the Kelp Bay area, over other areas within the Alaska Pulp Corporation contract boundary included several factors. Proposed legislation did not include this area for consideration as a potential wilderness or "moratorium" area, making it one of the least likely to be subject to change within the life of the project plan.



The Alaska Pulp Corporation 50-year timber sale contract was re-negotiated. There were two changes in the APC contract which directly affected the the decision to study the Kelp Bay area. The first change requires the Forest Service to designate individual operating areas. The second change provides minimum and maximum limits for the amount of timber volume to be made available each year to the Alaska Pulp Corporation. The first change allows the Forest Service to select smaller operating areas to study, like the eight VCU's in the Kelp Bay area. The second change focuses on efficiency, in terms of selecting a smaller area from which sufficient volume could be made available based on a one year planning effort.

The eight VCU's in the Kelp Bay area appear to have sufficient volume to warrant spending staff time and money to investigate the possibility of making timber volume available to APC. In addition to appearing to have sufficient volume, the area has been previously harvested in the early 1960's and mid 1970's. The areas of past harvest have regenerated, and have trees which range from 15 to 30 feet tall. Silviculturally, this area is able to support another harvest.

**4. Concern that monitoring plans be developed during the course of the project, and not be something "we promise" to do after the EIS.**

**FS Response:** One of the appendices to the Final EIS will address monitoring. As with any monitoring plan, the degree of implementation of a monitoring plan will depend upon staffing and budgeting provided by Congress.

**5. Concern with affects on cultural resources.**

**FS Response:** This originally was sent out as a potential issue in the scoping document. Few people commented on the issue. In addition, cultural resources are protected by law. Cultural resources will not be tracked actively as an issue. Of course, the affects of potential activities on cultural resources will be evaluated and included in the Draft EIS. Should timber harvest activities be in conflict with cultural resources, then appropriate mitigation measures would be recommended.

**What is the next logical step?**

The interdisciplinary planning team will continue collecting field information throughout the summer. In October, the tentative alternatives will be developed prior to analysis of effects. A third informational Bulletin will be published sometime in the fall to detail the areas being considered for harvest and the themes of the developed alternatives.

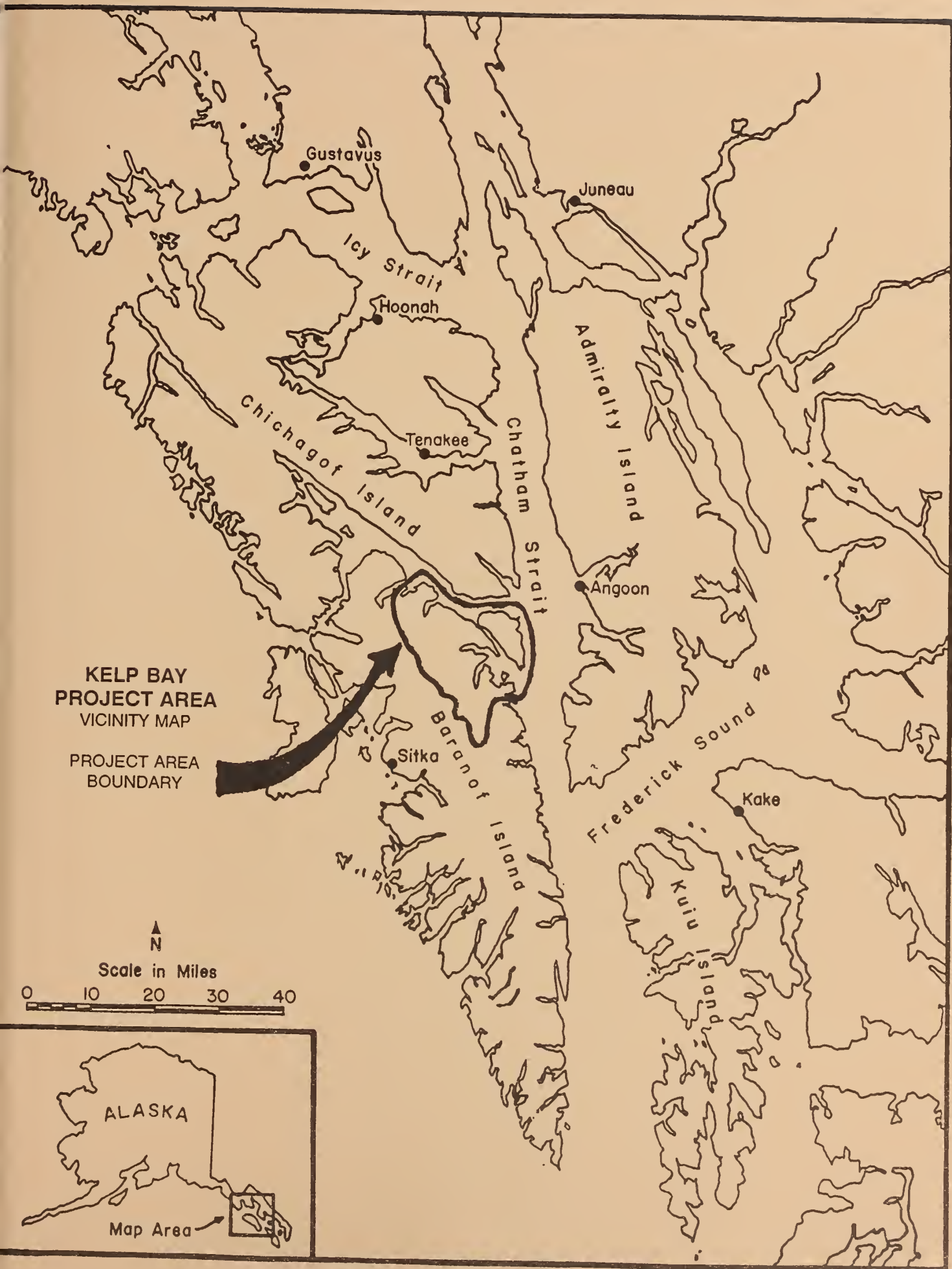
## **Closing Remarks**

We hope you will stay active in the planning process. Your continued interest and participation is essential for us to be successful. We look forward to working with you in managing the Tongass National Forest.

**For Additional Information contact:**

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